

The Spy Game Is Usually Pretty Dreary

BY RALPH MCGILL

NEW YORK—A Russian spy story recently made headlines for a day. A U.S. employe in a plant doing classified military work was passing on information to Soviets attached to the UN and consulate offices. The FBI had done its usual good job—watching the suspect since April.

We will never know, but it would be interesting to see and hear the Soviets who evaluate the work of their agents. The company employing the Russian-born engineer who was turning over papers to those who had bought him had been co-operating with the FBI for about seven months. We may, therefore, assume that the data and drawings which the American was handing over were very accurate in appearance and detail—but not truly so. They were, one may guess, valid in appearance so that the Russians would



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spend hours and hours, and perhaps even large sums of money, to work them out. What happens, one wonders, when the purchasers of classified material find they have been had?

IT HAS BEEN only since World War II that we have become really aware of "spying." In the old days we thought of "spies" in terms of beautiful women who seduced a government official who was privy to valuable information. For some years, in the 1920s, the movies were greatly attracted to this sort of plot. Brief cases were stolen on international trains; the unsuspecting, or careless, envoy was made drunk or given knockout

drops, and then robbed of his papers. Or, enchanted by some beautiful seductress, he babbled away the vital information of when armies were to march.

WHAT CHIEFLY impresses us today is the amount of intelligence and counterintelligence work and the realization there is not much, if any, romance in it. It is at once a routine, hack, dreary business (in which all nations, large and small, engage) of poring over the daily mass of information available, classifying and evaluating it. It is the continual effort to find out what new weapons, machines, technical processes, and scientific breakthroughs are being made.

There are agents who work at trying to discover the political trends of nations; their economic successes and failures, the attitudes of their labor unions, the so-called masses, intellectuals, and the activities of the extreme right. And, of course, there are the eyes and minds directed to-

ward military and space operations. The business of "spying" is tougher today since all these things are a part of the whole in a highly industrial, scientific complex.

WE HAVE become almost accustomed to reading about our CIA "failures" in Viet Nam and Cuba. But, as former CIA chief Allen Dulles says in a recent book, we hear only of the failures. The successes are not publicized, and the latter far outweigh the former. Mr. Dulles also lets us know how huge has grown the task of carrying on what is one of the oldest professions.

A few months ago some of the U.S. Embassy staff in Moscow were expelled for "spying." A British business man was sentenced to prison in Russia for spying. A Russian colonel was executed for having sold secrets for a number of years. Now we have caught some of theirs. "The game" goes on. We can only hope ours are the best.